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Role of the campus with CIA sets off heated debate

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Recruitment and research at stake; guidelines sought

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Should the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) or other United States intelligence organizations recruit and employ active informants and researchers on university campuses?

Does a secret or open relationship with an intelligence agency compromise a teacher, student, or university administrative officer, not to mention the academic freedom of the institution concerned?

Recent developments on at least some campuses would seem to suggest that the answers are "no" to the first question and "yes" to the second.

Anti-CIA rallies at Georgetown University here in Washington, at Princeton, and at other universities have shown vehement student and faculty opposition to CIA involvement. Both student and off-campus activist groups are claiming that affiliations with the CIA have also dragged US universities into involvement in the American intelligence and foreign policy failures in Iran.

Now the whole question of the CIA on campus is being squarely addressed by congressional committees that are working on the draft of a "charter" for US intelligence activities.

The draft charter, congressional sources say, would allow intelligence agencies to use American scholars traveling abroad for "operational assistance," provided a senior official at such a person's institution were notified of any paid relationship.

Academics could help intelligence agencies to recruit at home or abroad. One version recommended in last year's report of the Senate Intelligence Committee, chaired by Frank Church (D) of Idaho, would permit use of academicians and would require that the officials of the institutions concerned be notified.

Birch Bayh (D) of Indiana, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, has acknowledged that in the dilemma between effective intelligence-gathering and the infringement of academic and other freedoms, "fundamental constitutional rights of speech, press, assembly, and privacy are at stake."

On Jan. 30, Iranians and other students at Georgetown demonstrated against CIA personnel sent to university offices to recruit. The demonstrations followed public charges by Prof. Thomas Ricks, an expert on Iran, and John Kelly, of the anti-CIA magazine, Counterspy, that the university had not lived up to public pledges to purge intelligence activities from campus or from its overseas operations.

'Lists' read

Mr. Kelly read out lists, which he promised to publish "shortly" in Counterspy, of Georgetown faculty members and lecturers who, he claimed, had been or still were active "CIA officers." He also listed US embassy officers in Tehran, Iran, who he claimed were CIA agents "under cover." Mr. Kelly claimed they had been assigned to the embassy last December to try to salvage the regime of Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi and prepare, if possible, a military coup to restore him to power.

Counterspy and a related publication, Covert Action, specialize in CIA exposés. Publication in Counterspy of the name of the CIA station chief in Athens, John Welch, was followed by Welch's murder there in December, 1978.

Professor Ricks charged that Georgetown's involvement in the "Ferdowsi project," an ostensibly medical research venture in Mashad, Iran, funded by the Pahlavi Foundation (based on the Shah's private fortune), was an example of improper academic involvement in the world of clandestine political operations abroad.

"The academy," Professor Ricks said, "is an open institution." Scholars "either work with society, or work against its interest." Knowledge gained by research "must, by its very nature, be public knowledge," he added.

'Serious threats' charged

Student resolutions at Georgetown, Princeton, Harvard, and elsewhere recently called for an end to covert CIA activities on campus, which the Georgetown students said posed "serious threats to the integrity, credibility, and independence of our academic community."

CIA spokesmen insist the agency must maintain relationships with the US academic community, because it needs its expertise. CIA Director Stansfield Turner told Harvard president Derek Bok in a letter last May that he refused to accept Harvard's "guidelines" restricting CIA actions.

Accepting them would make it "impossible to do the required job for our country," Admiral Turner repeated on a CBS "Face the Nation" program last Oct. 28.

The CIA director for administration, John Blake, now retired, in an affidavit in June, responding to a civil suit by a UCLA graduate student, said "identities and affiliation" of campus contacts with the CIA "must be protected" so that relationships would continue. Admiral Turner reaffirmed this principle in a letter to the president of the University of Michigan, Robben W. Fleming, last July 17.

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